

Disability Awareness Month

INCREASING AWARENESS THROUGH YOUR BUSINESS

It is important that all employees in your company or organization have an awareness of people with disabilities, because they might encounter business contacts, clients and/or customers with disabilities or hire employees with disabilities. That awareness includes understanding how to interact with and make services accessible to people with disabilities in order to maintain strong business relationships with them. This attitude projects a favorable image not only to people with disabilities but also to the surrounding community.

In addition, understanding and awareness will help your employees welcome and accept a co-worker who acquires a disability, and/or new employee with a disability.

The enclosed information offers ways your company or organization can participate in Disability Awareness Month during March. If you have a public relations or communications department, many of the activities can be planned and implemented by that office. If there is no communications department, select an individual to chair your activities. You might want to form a committee to handle the various disability awareness projects.

Interacting with People with Disabilities

People with disabilities are people first; their disabilities come second. Proper communication and interaction with employees, customers and clients with disabilities is essential. Attached you will find the Ten Commandments of Etiquette and a tip sheet on the correct language to use in communication with people with disabilities. The same information is available in the Council's "Power of Words" brochure. The brochure can be posted on bulletin boards, included with employee paychecks, routed throughout the office or reprinted in a company newsletter. If you have not ordered "Power of Words" brochures for your company and would like to, contact

Kim Dennison at (317) 631-6400 (voice), (317) 631-6499 (fax) or kdennison@bjmpr.com (e-mail).

General Awareness

There are many ways to increase awareness among your employees about people with disabilities. Following are some projects other organizations have successfully implemented for Awareness Month in previous years:

- Place Awareness Month posters in hallways, on bulletin boards, in the lunchroom, in windows and any other high-traffic areas where they will be seen by many people.
- Carry a Disability Awareness Month message on indoor and/or outdoor message boards, print advertisements, answering machines, fax cover sheets, metered mail, grocery bags, placemats, tray liners and billing statements. Use camera-ready artwork along with your message. Be creative!
- Enclose stuffers with employee paychecks, customer and client mailings/billings and customer purchases.
- Organize an Awareness Month Mini-Conference and invite speakers to discuss hiring and working with people with disabilities and making accommodations for them. Employees who have disabilities can also relate their own personal workplace experiences.
- Set up an Awareness Month display in the lobby of your building. Include books, information and items that might aid people with disabilities in job performance.
- Use the enclosed myths and facts about people with disabilities at a staff meeting or for employee training.
- Incorporate information about people with disabilities into your company's diversity training and activities.

Materials are available, including posters and bookmarks. Information packets are available for setting up a speaker event and for increasing awareness about the American with Disabilities Act. Download these or other planning packets from the Council website at: www.in.gov/gpcpd or for a print copy, contact Kim Dennison at (317) 631-6400 (voice), (317) 631-6499 (fax) or kdennison@bjmpr.com (e-mail).

Increase Awareness of The ADA

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) guarantees and protects the rights of people with disabilities as American citizens and makes discrimination based on a person's disability illegal. Its passage by Congress and signing by the president on July 26, 1990 signifies

an awareness that people with disabilities deserve the same rights of citizenship as people without disabilities.

There are some 54 million Americans or about 20% of the population who have a physical or mental disability. This number will continue to grow as our nation's elderly population increases.

There are many ways to increase awareness about the ADA within your business. These activities include:

1. Convene a group to review agency materials and public spaces. Consider these questions:
 - Are materials available in electronic or other alternative formats?
 - Does staff know how to respond to relay calls from citizens with hearing or speech impairments?
 - Are public restrooms and building entrances accessible?
2. Organize a training event on ADA issues and policy for front line staff and human resource professionals.
3. Survey your building to identify accessibility "hot spots" using the enclosed ADA checklist. The checklist also lists ways to make the building more accessible and compliant with the ADA. Federal, state and local building codes might contain certain requirements for accessibility. The ACCESS Board has more information on standards for accessible design. Please call the board at (800) 872-2253 (voice/TT) for more information.

Tax Incentives:

Businesses that make their facilities more accessible to people with disabilities are allowed a tax deduction. A maximum of \$15,000 can be deducted for the tax year in which the expense was incurred. The deduction is claimed by identifying it as a separate item when reporting other business expenses on the standard IRS form. Any amount in excess of \$15,000 might be added to the basis of the property that is subject to depreciation. For more information on this tax deduction, contact your local IRS office. (Refer to IRS code Section 190.)

To encourage ADA compliance by small businesses, the IRS also offers a Disabled Access Credit (Section 44 of the IRS Code). This allows a tax credit of up to \$5,000 a year, as long as expenditures are greater than \$250 and less than \$10,250. Up to 50 percent of "eligible access expenditures" can be deducted. Be sure to double-check these figures with your tax preparer to be sure they are the most up-to-date numbers available.

Please refer to the attached resources pages at the end of this packet for additional programs that apply to your business.

Company Newsletter

A newsletter is an effective tool for passing information on to employees and customers. In your March newsletter, devote a page to Disability Awareness Month. You may use the general release the Council mails to Indiana media, or write your own articles. Write about an employee who has a disability or someone who has a child with a disability. Interview the CEO for his or her feelings on people with disabilities. What is the company's policy on hiring people with disabilities? Provide tips for interacting with people with disabilities and accessibility standards. Camera-ready art is included in this packet for use in newsletters or other publications.

Company Web Site

According to the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines Web site, you need to consider that many users might be operating in contexts that are very different from your own. These contexts include:

- They might not be able to see, hear, move or might not be able to process types of information easily.
- They might have difficulty reading or comprehending text.
- They might not have or be able to use a keyboard or mouse.
- They might have a text-only screen, a small screen or a slow Internet connection.
- They might not speak or understand fluently the language the document is written in.
- They might be in a situation where their eyes, ears or hands are busy or interfered with (e.g., working in a loud environment).
- They might have an early version of a browser, a different browser entirely, a voice browser, or a different operating system.
- For more information on making your Web site accessible, visit www.w3.org.

Getting Involved – Volunteer Incentives

Offer volunteer incentives during Awareness Month and throughout the year. Make a donation (\$25, \$50, \$100, \$500 or \$1,000) to a local disabilities organization – for every hour that one of your employees volunteers time to the organization. Organize a group of employees to help with a fundraiser or with computer training. Give employees paid release time to volunteer and recognize their efforts in the company newsletter or on the company website.

Getting Involved – Hiring People with Disabilities

The following information answers questions many employers have about people with disabilities and provides information to begin the process of hiring people with disabilities.

Productivity and Capability

The assumption that people with disabilities are unproductive is false. People with disabilities can be just as productive, loyal, punctual, educated and qualified as people without disabilities. Turnover among people with disabilities is generally low. See attached *Myths and facts about People with Disabilities* for more information.

How to Locate Employees with Disabilities

There are several ways to attract people with disabilities to your company. Contact the Family and Social Services Administration, Division of Disability, Aging and Rehabilitative Services at 1-800-545-7763 (voice) and ask for the number of the local Vocational Rehabilitative Office. These and other local rehabilitation agencies specializing in placing people with disabilities in the workforce, and serve as a helpful liaison between the employer and potential employee.

“Supported employment” is one such service many organizations provide to their clients. Supported employment combines job procurement, placement, training and ongoing support for people with disabilities. Job coaches work together with employers and people with disabilities to meet and match abilities, skills and needs of each party.

Incentives

Employers who hire people with disabilities should investigate the incentives available to them. With some incentives, it often costs less to employ a person with a disability than someone without a disability.

- Supported employment programs provide on-the-job training, counseling and ongoing support to employees with disabilities at no cost to the employer.
- The Job Training Partnership Act provides federal and state on-the-job training funds averaging 50 percent of a trainee’s wages for the first six months of employment. Reimbursements for classroom training and services such as child care and transportation are also available if you qualify for the program. Contact your local office of Workforce development or Vocational Rehabilitation for more details.

RESOURCES

There are a variety of resources available about the ADA. Your company or organization might already have received literature about it. Here are sources of ADA-related information:

National and Regional ADA Resources

Great Lakes ADA Center

University of Illinois at Chicago
Institute on Disability & Human Development
MC 728
1640 West Roosevelt Road, Room 405
Chicago, IL 60608
800-949-4232 (voice/TT)
312-413-1407 (V/TTY)
312-413-1856 (Fax)
www.adagreatlakes.org

U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ)

Americans with Disabilities

950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Civil Rights /Disability Rights Section - NYAV
Washington, D.C. 20530
ADA info line :
800 - 514 - 0301 (voice)
800 - 514 - 0383 (TTY)
202-307-1198 (fax)
www.usdoj.gov/crt/ada/adahom1.htm

Indiana ADA Resources

ADA Indiana

Indiana Institute on Disability and Community
2853 E. 10th Street
Bloomington, IN 47408
812-855-6508 (voice)
812-855-9396 (TT)
812-855-9630 (fax)
adainfo@indiana.edu
<http://www.iidc.indiana.edu/cpps/ada/>

Governor's Council for People with Disabilities

150 W. Market St., Suite 628
Indianapolis, IN 46204
317-232-7770 (voice)
317-232-7771 (TT)
317-233-3712 (fax)
GPCPD@gpcpd.org (e-mail)
www.in.gov/gpcpd

Job Accommodations Network

West Virginia University
P.O. Box 6080
Morgantown, WV 26506-6080
800-526-7234 (voice/TT)
304-293-5407 (fax)
jan@jan.wvu.edu (email)
www.jan.wvu.edu

National Center on Accessibility (recreation)

Indiana University
501 North Morton St, Suite 109
Bloomington, IN 47404
(812) 856-4422 (voice)
(812) 856-4421 (TT)
(812) 856-4480 (fax)
nca@indiana.edu (email)
www.indiana.edu/~nca

Indiana Protection & Advocacy Services

4701 N. Keystone, Suite 222
Indianapolis, IN 46205
800-622-4845 (voice)
800-838-1131 (TT)
Indianapolis and south: Dann Ward at 1-800-622-4845, ext. 234, or dward@ipas.IN.gov.
For Northern Indiana, contact Debbie Dulla at 1-800-622-4845, ext. 236, or ddulla@ipas.IN.gov.
www.in.gov/ipas

ATTAIN, Inc.

(Technology)
5333 Commerce Square Drive, Suite G
Indianapolis, IN 46237
800-528-8246(toll free)
attaininfo@attaininc.org (e-mail)
www.attaininc.org

Breaking New Ground Resource Center

Purdue University
1146 ABE Bldg.
West Lafayette, IN 47907-1146
800-825-4264 (voice)
765-494-5088 (TT)
765-496-1356 (fax)
bng@ecn.purdue.edu (email)
www.ecn.purdue.edu/ABE/Extension/BNG/

Indiana Civil Rights Commission

Indiana Government Center North
100 N. Senate Ave.
Room N103
Indianapolis, IN 46204
317-232-2600 (voice)
800-628-2909 (voice)
800-743-3333 (TT)
317-232-6580 (fax)
www.in.gov/icrc

Indiana Centers for Independent Living

Nancy Young, SILC Liaison
IN-DARS/Vocational Rehabilitation Services
402 West Washington, Room W453
Indianapolis, IN 46204
(317) 232-1303 (voice)
(317) 232-1427 (TT)
(317) 232-6478 (Fax)
nyoung@fssa.state.in.us

ATTIC Center for Independent Living

1721 W Washington Ave.
Vincennes, IN 47591
812-886-0575 (voice)
877-96-ATTIC (voice)
812-886-1128 (fax)
INATTIC1@aol.com (e-mail)
www.theattic.org

Allen County League for the Blind and Disabled

5821 S. Anthony Blvd.
Fort Wayne IN 46816
260-441-0551 (voice/TT)
800-889-3443 (voice/TT)
260-441-7760 (fax)
the.league@verizon.net (email)
www.the-league.org

Indiana State Government Department of Personnel

P.O. Box 7083
402 W. Washington Street, Room W161
Indianapolis, IN 46204
317-233-0200 (voice)
317-232-1979 (fax)
www.in.gov/jobs

**Department of Vocational Rehabilitation
Family and Social Services Administration**

402 W. Washington Street, Room W451
Indianapolis, IN 46207-7083
317-232-1147 (voice)
800-545-7763 (voice)
www.in.gov/fssa/

**Southern Indiana Center for Independent Living
(SICIL)**

651 X St.
Bedford, IN 47421
812-277-9626 (voice/TT)
800-845-6914 (voice/TT)
812-277-9628 (fax)
sicil@tima.com (e-mail)

Everybody Counts, Inc.

9111 Broadway, Suite A
Merrillville, IN 46410
219-769-5055 (voice)
219-756-3323 (TT)
219-769-5325 (fax)
ecounts@netnitco.net (e-mail)
www.lakenetwi.org/member/everybodycounts/

Indianapolis Resource Center for Independent Living

1426 W 29th St
Indianapolis, IN 46208
317-926-1660 (voice)
800-860-7181 (voice/TT)
www.ircil.org/
info@ircil.org (e-mail)

Wabash Independent Living and Learning Center (WILL)

4312 S. Seventh Street
Terre Haute, IN 47802
812-232-9455 (voice)
877-915-9455 (voice)
812-299-9061 (fax)
Info@thewillcenter.org (email)
www.thewillcenter.org

Independent Living Center of Eastern Indiana

201 South 5th St.
Richmond, IN 47374
765-939-9226 (voice)
877-939-9226 (voice)
765-939-1309 (TT)
765-935-2215 (fax)
info@ilcein.org (email)
www.ilcein.org

RESOURCES

Accessibility

Job Accommodation Network can assist you in exploring what accommodations might work for employees with disabilities. Call (800) 526-7234 (voice/TT) or for an online searchable database go to: <http://www.jan.wvu.edu/>

The Great Lakes ADA Center can provide information ADA information, technical assistance and copies of ADA documents supplied by the EEOC and the Department of Justice. The documents are available in standard print, large print, audio cassette, Braille and computer disk. They have monthly audio training on a variety of topics. Session can also be accessed on line. Call (800) 949-4232 (voice/TT).

American National Standards Institute (ANSI) provides information on accessibility standards for buildings. Write to: ANSI, 1430 Broadway, New York, NY 10018. <http://www.ansi.org/>

PUBLICATIONS ON THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA)

ADA Document Portal: www.adaportal.org/

The ADA Collection consists of more than 7,400 documents. Use the search box to enter keywords and search the entire ADA Collection. You can choose to search "Everything" or to search an ADA category, such as "Only Employment".

The documents listed below are all available at the ADA Document Portal

Title I- Employment

Title I Fact Sheet - This document provides a brief summary of the key requirements of title I (employment) of the ADA.

Title I Q&A - This brief document provides a list frequently asked questions related to employment and the ADA.

Your Responsibilities as an Employer under the ADA - Describes the responsibilities of employers presented in the form of frequently asked questions.

The Americans with Disabilities Act: A Primer for Small Business - Provides an easy-to-read, overview of the basic employment provisions of the ADA as they relate to employees and job applicants for businesses with 15 to 100 employees.

Reasonable Accommodation and Undue Hardship - Clarifies the rights and responsibilities of employers and individuals with disabilities regarding reasonable accommodation and undue hardship.

The Family and Medical Leave Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act, and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 - Provides technical assistance on some common questions that have arisen about the ADA and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act when the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 (FMLA) also applies

Title III – Public Accommodations and Services Operated by Private Entities

Title III Highlights - A 12-page outline of the key requirements of the ADA for businesses and non-profit agencies. Provides detailed information in bullet format for quick reference.

ADA Guide for Small Business - This 15-page illustrated guide presents an overview of some basic ADA requirements for small businesses that provide goods and services to the public. It provides guidance on tax credits and how to make their services accessible.

Tax Credit Pack - contains information about the disabled access credit that is available for small businesses and the tax deduction that is available for businesses of any size. It also includes the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) form and instructions for claiming the disabled access credit

Commonly Asked Questions About Service Animals in Places of Business - This document provides a list of the most common questions about service animals in places of business.

A SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Materials listed below can be borrowed from the library of the Indiana Institute on Disability and Community, (812) 855-9396 (voice/TT) or (800) 437-7924 (voice/TT).

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Schwartz, D. B., McKnight, J., & Kendrick, M. (Eds.). (1988). *A story I heard: A compendium of stories, essays, and poetry about people with disabilities and American life*. Harrisburg, Pa.: Developmental Disabilities Planning Council.

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Ten Commandments of Etiquette for Communicating with People with Disabilities

The following Ten Commandments of Etiquette will help you communicate more effectively with people with disabilities.

1. When talking with a person with a disability, use eye contact and speak directly to that person rather than through a companion or sign language interpreter.
2. When introduced to a person with a disability, it is appropriate to offer to shake hands. People with limited hand use or who wear an artificial limb usually can shake hands. (Shaking hands with the left hand is an acceptable greeting.)
3. When meeting a person who is visually impaired, always identify yourself and others who may be with you. When conversing in a group, remember to identify the person to whom you are speaking.
4. If you offer assistance, wait until the offer is accepted. Then listen to or ask for instructions.
5. Treat adults as adults. Address people who have disabilities by their first names only when extending the same familiarity to all others. Never patronize people who use wheelchairs by patting them on the head or shoulder.
6. A wheelchair is part of the personal body space of the person who uses it. Leaning on a person's wheelchair is similar to leaning on a person and is generally considered inappropriate.
7. Listen attentively when you're talking with a person who has difficulty speaking. Be patient and wait for the person to finish, rather than correcting or speaking for the person. If necessary, ask short questions that require short answers, a nod or shake of the head. Never pretend to understand if you are having difficulty in doing so. Instead, repeat what you have understood and allow the person to respond.
8. When speaking with a person who uses a wheelchair or a person who uses crutches, place yourself at eye level in front of the person to facilitate the conversation.
9. To get the attention of a person who is deaf, tap the person on the shoulder or wave your hand. Look directly at the person and speak clearly, slowly and expressively to determine if the person can read your lips. Be sensitive to those who lip read by placing yourself so that you face the light source and keeping hands and food away from your mouth when speaking.
10. Relax. Don't be embarrassed if you use common expressions – such as “See you later” or “Did you hear about that?” – that seem to relate to the person's disability. It's okay to ask questions when you're unsure of what to do.

This list and language guide is available as part of in the Council's *Power of Words* brochure. Order copies with your Disability Awareness Month materials .To order, contact Kim Dennison at (317) 631-6400 (voice), (317) 631-6499 (fax) or kdennison@bjmpr.com (e-mail).

LANGUAGE GUIDELINES

Disrespectful/inappropriate terms	Respectful terms
▪ Crazy/insane/deranged	▪ Psychiatric disability
▪ Cripple/crippled person	▪ Person with a disability
▪ Deaf and dumb/deaf-mute	▪ Deaf or *hard of hearing, as appropriate – Deafness refers to a profound hearing loss, while a person who is hard of hearing has mild to moderate hearing loss. When the person is also unable to speak, say “person who is deaf and unable to speak.” * People with hearing loss is now the preferred term
▪ Differently-abled/Handi-capable	▪ Has a disability – Avoid trendy or “cute” terms, which are viewed by many people with disabilities as condescending.
▪ The disabled/the blind/the deaf	▪ People with disabilities/people who are blind/people who are deaf
▪ Handicap	▪ Disability
▪ Handicapped parking/restrooms/seating	▪ Accessible parking/restrooms/seating
▪ Mental retardation/mentally retarded	▪ Intellectual disability/person with an intellectual disability – “Cognitive disability” is also widely used.
▪ Mongoloid	▪ Person with Down syndrome
▪ Retard	▪ Person with an intellectual disability
▪ Stricken with/victim of/suffering from [a particular disability]	▪ Had or has [a particular disability] – Do not use negative terms that imply illness or suggest that people with disabilities should be pitied.
▪ Wheelchair-bound/confined to a wheelchair	▪ Uses a wheelchair – For a person with a disability, a wheelchair is a liberating, not a confining, tool; it creates freedom of movement for people who cannot walk.

Myths and Facts About People with Disabilities

Myths are roadblocks that interfere with the ability of persons with disabilities to have equality in employment. These roadblocks usually result from a lack of experience and interaction with persons with disabilities. This lack of familiarity has nourished negative attitudes concerning employment of persons with disabilities. Listed below are some common myths and the facts that tell the real story.

MYTH: Hiring employees with disabilities increases workers compensation insurance rates.

FACT: Insurance rates are based solely on the relative hazards of the operation and the organization's accident experience, not on whether workers have disabilities.

MYTH: Employees with disabilities have a higher absentee rate than employees without disabilities.

FACT: Studies by firms such as DuPont show that employees with disabilities are not absent any more than employees without disabilities.

MYTH: Persons with disabilities are inspirational, courageous, and brave for being able to overcome their disability.

FACT: Persons with disabilities are simply carrying on normal activities of living when they drive to work, go grocery shopping, pay their bills, or compete in athletic events.

MYTH: Persons with disabilities need to be protected from failing.

FACT: Persons with disabilities have a right to participate in the full range of human experiences including success and failure. Employers should have the same expectations of, and work requirements for, all employees.

MYTH: Persons with disabilities are unable to meet performance standards, thus making them a bad employment risk.

FACT: In 1990, DuPont conducted a survey of 811 employees with disabilities and found 90% rated average or better in job performance compared to 95% for employees without disabilities. A similar 1981 DuPont study which involved 2,745 employees with disabilities found that 92% of employees with disabilities rated average or better in job performance compared to 90% of employees without disabilities. The 1981 study results were comparable to DuPont's 1973 job performance study.

MYTH: Persons with disabilities have problems getting to work.

FACT: Persons with disabilities are capable of supplying their own transportation by choosing to walk, use a car pool, drive, take public transportation, or a cab. Their modes of transportation to work are as varied as those of other employees.

MYTH: Persons who are deaf make ideal employees in noisy work environments.

FACT: Loud noises of a certain vibratory nature can cause further harm to the auditory system. Persons who are deaf should be hired for all jobs that they have the skills and talents to perform. No person with a disability should be prejudged regarding employment opportunities.

MYTH: Considerable expense is necessary to accommodate workers with disabilities.

FACT: Most workers with disabilities require no special accommodations and the cost for those who do is minimal or much lower than many employers believe. Studies by the Office of Disability Employment Policy's Job Accommodation Network have shown that 15% of accommodations cost nothing, 51% cost between \$1 and \$500, 12% cost between \$501 and \$1,000, and 22% cost more than \$1,000.

Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Disability Employment Policy